

Cold vs. Flu, know the difference



Your child is not feeling well. They have a cough, sore throat and a high fever. Could it be the flu? Or just a cold?

In most cases the flu makes a child feel worse than a cold would but it's not always easy to tell the difference between the two. Here are some tips on what to look for and what to do.

Colds or Flu:

Answer these questions to help you see if your child has either a cold or the flu:

Cold vs. Flu: A guide to Symptoms

Questions	Cold	Flu
Did the illness come on suddenly?	No	Yes
Does your child have a high fever?	No (or fever is mild)	Yes
Is your child's energy level very low?	No	Yes
Is your child's head achy?	No	Yes
Is your child's appetite less than normal?	No	Yes
Are your child's muscles achy?	No	Yes
Does your child have chills?	No	Yes

If you answered "Yes," to most of these questions chances are your child has the flu. If your answers were mostly "No," it's probably a cold.



When should you as a parent call the doctor?

If you have any doubts about your child's signs or symptoms, you should get in contact with their physician. An illness that seems like the common cold can actually turn out to be the flu. Other illnesses like strep throat or pneumonia can also seem like the flu. Even doctors sometimes need to run a test to know for sure that it is the flu and not just a cold.

Seek medical help right away if your child:

- Has trouble breathing
- Seems confused
- Seems to be getting worse
- Has a high fever
- Has a sore throat
- Has a bad headache

How is the flu treated?

Most of the time, your child can be cared for at home with lots of rest, plenty of liquids and comfort.

Even the healthiest of kids can struggle with the flu. Some kids, like those younger than 5 years old and those with asthma are more likely to have problems if they get the flu. In some cases, a doctor might prescribe an antiviral medication to lessen flu symptoms.



What can you as a parent do?

- The best medicine is prevention. Make sure that everyone in your family gets a flu shot every year.
- Teach and encourage your child to wash their hands frequently especially during flu season when at school and at home
- If your child has asthma or any other illness, call their physician right away if your child is showing any signs or symptoms of the flu. The physician might need to prescribe your child an antiviral medication, which only works when a child starts to take it within 48 hours of when the flu symptoms start.

What to do if your child is going to miss school?

If your child will be missing school due to having the flu or a cold, please be sure to contact the school's front office at 661-722-4287 and inform us on how long your child will be out of school. Bring your child back to school when the physician recommends, once they are feeling better, and when they are fever free for 24 hrs without the use of medications.

